

REMARKS

This is a response to the Final Office Action mailed March 25, 2004. The Final Office Action rejected claims 1 and 151 under 35 U.S.C. §102 and objected to claims 2-6, 25-32, 60, 90-91, 107, 108, 134-136, and 152-154. Claims 1, 25, 28, 30, 152, and 153 have been amended to correct typographical errors and amend dependencies. Claims 151 and 154 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 2-6, 25-32, 60, 89-91, 107, 108, and 134-136, and 152-153 remain pending in the application..

Reconsideration in light of the amendments and remarks made herein is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action rejected independent claims 1 and 151 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by WO9827571A or EP0945886A.

Applicants traverse this rejection in its entirety.

Claims 151 and 154 have been cancelled. Applicants have amended claims 1, 25, 28, 30, 152, and 153 to correct typographical errors and to fix dependencies. Applicants submit that none of these amendments are substantive and would not require a new search.

In a telephonic interview with Examiner Hung V. Ngo, conducted on July 12, 2004, Applicants discussed the differences between the present claimed invention and the cited reference. In particular, Applicants clarified that in the present invention, pressure adjustment is performed during the two-panel sealing step. Independent claims 1 recites "the sealing step includes: a pressure adjustment sub-step for adjusting pressure so that pressure inside the surrounding unit is lower than pressure outside the surrounding unit." By performing the

pressure adjustment during the sealing step, the present claimed method is more efficient than the prior art methods.

The cited reference WO9827571A or EP0945886A teaches first bonding or sealing the two panels and then adjusting the pressure in the space between the panels. In Column 20, lines 2-24 of EP0945886A, this reference teaches the use of the piping member 13 for purging air from the inner surface of the casing and filling it with a discharge gas. Reference EP0945886A does not disclose nor suggest that during such a sealing step or bonding step the pressure inside the surrounding unit is purposefully adjusted to be lower than the pressure outside the surrounding unit. See, for example, Column 20, line 41 through Column 21, line 26.

Thus, the cited prior art fails to teach performing the sealing and pressure adjusting in the same step as claimed. Applicants submit that independent claims 1 and all of its dependent claims are allowable over the cited prior art.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by WO9827571A or EP0945886A be withdrawn.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 2-6, 25-32, 60, 90-91, 107, 108, 134-136, and 152-154. Applicants have amended claims 25 and 152 to incorporate the limitations of cancelled claims 151. Applicants submit that as a result of the amendment, independent claims 25 and 152, and their dependent claims, are in condition of allowance. For the reasons cited above, Applicants submit that independent claim 1 is also allowable over the cited prior art references.

CONCLUSION

In view of the amendments and remarks made above, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully solicited. Authorization is hereby given to charge our Deposit Account No. 19-2814 for any charges that may be due. Furthermore, if an extension is required, then Applicants hereby request such an extension.

Respectfully submitted,

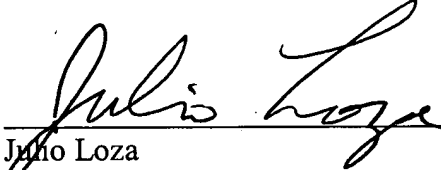
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I hereby certify that this document is being deposited on July 23, 2004 with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail under 37 C.F.R. 1.8 and is addressed to Mail Stop AF, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313

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